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ABSTRACT

With the results of the first national survey of children's library services in the United States to be finalized in 1991, a historical perspective on library service is warranted to add comparative value to the new findings. The Youngstown (Ohio) Public Library, which began with a small collection in 1880, traces its history of children's services as far back as public library service to children is documented; and therefore, its history can be generalized to give retrospective value to the national survey. The development of children's services is traced in a narrative based upon archival records of the library system. The paper concludes with a brief assessment of the library's service to children today. (99 endnotes; 77 references) (MAB)

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HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE YOUNGSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1880 - 1990

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Marilyn C. Steiner

July 1991

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Marilyn C. Steiner
Summer, 1991

ABSTRACT

History of Children's Services in the
Youngstown Public Library, 1880 - 1990

With the results of the first national survey of children's library services in the United States soon to be finalized, a historical perspective on library service is warranted to add comparative value to the new findings. The Youngstown Public Library traces its history of children's services as far back as American public library service to children is documented; and therefore, its history can be generalized to give a retrospective value to the national survey. The development of children's services, up to the standards expected today, is traced in a chronology based upon archival records of the library system.

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B.S., Youngstown State University, 1986

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1991

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY SERVICES ARE DEFINED NATIONWIDE

The first national survey of children's services and resources in United States public libraries was recently concluded. Compiled by Ray M. Fry, preliminary findings show that in 1988, 37% of public library users were children fourteen years of age and under. The study also notes that only 34% of the public libraries surveyed had a full-time children's librarian on staff.[1] The American Library Association recognizes a universal list of motives for providing library service to children: (1) to support the rising rate of literacy, (2) to enhance the cultural, intellectual, and social awareness of children, and (3) to provide a variety of materials to meet the individual learning needs and interests of children.[2]

A historical study of children's library services at a large metropolitan library system will add an important perspective to the national survey. The Youngstown Public Library has offered a multitude of services to the children in the surrounding communities throughout its existence. By tracing the history of children's services at Youngstown

Public Library, through the economic and technological changes it has encompassed, a comparative perspective on the relevance of the national survey results may be appreciated.

In Fry's national survey, children's services are defined in terms of staffing, programming, and access and materials available to children. The existence or nonexistence of a full-time children's librarian defines staffing services. Programming services are calculated by the number of programs provided at various age levels of children plus cooperation with schools. Access and materials services for children include access to the adult collection of books, inter-library loan services available to children, foreign language materials, audio and video materials and computer service access for children. All of these are calculated on a national average percentage.[3] Records of similar services have been kept at Youngstown Public Library and other libraries across the United States since the first children's services were provided in the late nineteenth century. An overview of children's services nationwide will preceed the in-depth study of services for children at Youngstown Public Library.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, public library service to children is little more than one hundred years old. In 1876, the pivotal year for public library service in the U.S., Melville Dewey called for the establishment of children's rooms in all U.S. public libraries.[4] This testament put into motion the drive for children's services.

The earliest establishers of services for children began by placing collections of books in schools. Within five years of Dewey's proclamation, nearly all public libraries confirmed that they were offering assistance to schools, especially at the grammar (7th to 9th) and high school levels.[5]

In these early days of service to children, access was the major service provided. Prior to the 1880s, access to public library collections was almost always restricted to adults.[6] By the early 1890s, most major library systems began to offer some access to books to children, usually by providing a corner or shelving range of suitable books for these young readers. In a few innovative cases, such as the Pawtucket Public Library in Rhode Island, unlimited access to

the entire collection was allowed. Along with the inclusion of books, some libraries provided suitable furniture for their small statured patrons. These early collections for children were primarily noncirculating collections with the librarians offering unsolicited selection advice to the children who visited them.[7]

As more libraries began to extend services to children, several systems began to separate the children's books to secluded areas of their libraries. This change was made to accommodate adult patrons, not children, as the separation allowed adults to enjoy their access without interruption from noisy young patrons.[8]

The first fully separate children's room is credited to a Brookline, Massachusetts library, where a basement storeroom was set up in 1890, with accommodations for sixteen children. Advocates of children's services denounced this first children's room as "...merely a place to send children to keep them quiet and out of the way of adults".[9]

In 1894, the first genuine Children's Room was established in the Denver Public Library. This collection of three thousand volumes was housed in a room especially designed with children in mind---furnishings and decor were suited to a child's taste, and unlimited access was had by all patrons regardless of age.[10] The only feature lacking in this innovative setting was the professional staff that children's libraries nationwide were soon to require.

Anne Carroll Moore is credited with being the first professional to undertake library work with children. Under the direction of Moore, The Pratt Institute Free Library offered a Children's Room with free access to the collection and with a trained staff to serve them. Moore established children's library courses as part of Pratt's librarianship program and was the first president of the American Library Association's children's library section started in 1900.[11]

By 1905, access and staffing had been defined for children's public libraries. Frances Jenkins Olcott, a children's librarian trainer in Pittsburgh, described in 1905:

> The ideal Children's Room should take the place of a child's private library, and it should, as far as possible, give the child a chance to browse among books of all classes and kinds, in a room beautifully proportioned and decorated, and presided over by a genial and sympathetic woman who has a genuine interest in the personalities and preferences of the boys and girls.[12]

Children had a place in American libraries and librarians had to be trained to service them---the final fullfillment to children in terms of special services and programming was soon to develop.

Moore, Olcott, and other children's services reformers of the early twentieth century inspired further growth in the profession. By the 1930s, Affie L. Powers lists, for the American Library Association, the following services that could and should be expected from every Children's Room in

the U.S.: (1) adequate and competent staff with one trained children's librarian in every Children's Room, (2) a professional policy governing the library which includes children's services, (3) a program of work with the children and for the children, (4) adequate book collections, and (5) adequate physical equipment.[13] Powers went on to define the services offered by the children's librarian to include after school hours for the children, school visiting, and especially outreach and extension services in terms of programming. Programming services were to include an introduction of books to small children by storytelling in small groups. For older children, book discussions and reading lists were suggested activities. Book talks with parents to discuss book selection was mentioned as an extension of children's services. Radio programs featuring stories and book discussions was suggested to reach those children who were unable to physically come to the library. Other outreach service included bookmobile stops in outlying areas and visitation to parks and recreation areas by librarians to promote the joy of reading in places that children found appealing.[14] Indeed, by the mid 1940s, the programming standards of public libraries were defined and the expectations were high.

The 1960s added two new avenues to children's work---the availability of audio/visual materials in libraries and a rapid rise in the number of books being published for children. Purchase of films and fil.mstrips plus the use of

records and tapes offered new ways for librarians to correlate literature and learning. Because of their high cost, selection was crucial and the use of audio/visual materials was almost always reserved for in-library only.[15] Selection was even more crucial with the growing number of children's books on the market in the 1960s. Librarians were forced to spend much more time with books in order to choose the best titles for the exploding population of the young readers.[16]

Children's services in the 1970s were further expanded in specialized ways. Classes for expectant parents on how to nurture their newborns began to appear in many public libraries. The use of relia, toys, puppets, and other interactive objects were purchased for libraries. Cultural and minority awareness were added to the list of considerations that children's librarians needed to use in book selection. Finally, an awareness of the physical needs of the handicapped child and of the bilingual child had to be met by public libraries so that access and accommodations could be had by all patrons. These additions of services to meet special needs were a positive move in the library profession, but with a growing shortage of professional librarians in the 1970s, more paraprofessional staff was added to meet these special groups. Children's services, in particular, were being staffed by paraprofessionals, thus weakening the professionalism of children's services nationwide.[17]

The 1980s brought to public libraries technology based on computer access to information. Children's librarians now had to contend not only with selection of materials, but with selection of the mode of the materials---print or nonprint---to best service their young clientele. An added responsibility of teaching the children to use data bases and other online systems was also added to the services expected for children.[18] New technology also inspired home video systems that allowed feature films and other recorded programs to be brought into the home at low cost. With the decrease in cost of these new audio/visual materials, accompanied by a high demand by the public, libraries added video recordings to the list of materials available. This addition created the need for children's librarians to select appropriate videos for children and to push for access to these new materials by all patrons.

Expectations and standards for children's services in the 1990s are provided in the Children's Library Services Handbook published in 1990. It lists minimum qualifications of children's librarians to include a master's degree with course work specifically in children's services preferred. Job responsibilities of children's librarians and expectations of services include: (1) assisting children in the use of the library and its materials, (2) book selection through appropriate reviewing sources, (3) scheduling, planning, conducting, and publicizing library activities and

programs for children of all ages, and (4) maintaining a pleasant, inviting environment in the children's area.[19]

The crucial elements of good service to children in public libraries have not changed much since services to children began in U.S. libraries. How individual libraries have met these expectations has set the standards for public library service to children. New evidence revealed by a national survey may dictate needs in children's services for the future, but a study of past practices, of past failures and successes, should also provide valuable information in preparing libraries for the future.

CHAPTER 3

REARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to trace the history of children's services at the Youngstown Public Library, a chronology of developments and important events in children's services must be formed. The chronology must encompass primary source and secondary source materials both contemporary (compiled at the times discussed) and retrospective. Annual reports, minutes of board meetings, ledgers from the Children's Room of the main library, and folders of contemporary pictoral sources and newspaper articles are available to research in the pursuit of this historical study.

CHAPTER 4

LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN IN THE YOUNGSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Reuben McMillan Free Library, or Youngstown Public Library (YPL) as it is commonly known, began in 1870 when two teachers discovered a box of 168 books in Wood Street School. The books were the remnants of the 1840 Ohio General Assembly's quota of books alloted to the Youngstown school district, a quota plan that had been suspended with the outbreak of civil war in the 1860s. Miss Julia Hitchcock and Miss Anna Pearson were the teachers who uncovered this treasure locked in the superintendent's office. Funded by the Youngstown Board of Education, a room was furnished in the school to act as a library, and Youngstown Public Library began its development.

Miss Hitchcock, feeling that the rigid content of most of the books in the initial 168 volume library was not adaptable to the needs of children, enlisted the help of educators and parents to raise money for collection expansion. Notedly, Reuben McMillan, school superintendent, helped Miss Hitchcock with the first in a series of annual entertainments. This first venture, in 1892, earned the library $100 and enabled the purchase of more suitable books

for the library.[20] Students and library staff performed the entertainments which were popular in Youngstown for several years. The program scheduled for May 4, 1881 contained choruses, a violin performance, readings from Tennyson, and a fan drill.[21] This rousing evening at the opera house netted the library $325 and was lauded as "...a flattering success".[22]

By 1875, the library became an association library available for free public use. The library was still funded by the Board of Education and headed by Superintendent McMillan. In 1880, the association was incorporated and assumed the title Youngstown Library Association. In 1890, the Ohio General Assembly passed a law enabling support for the library through local taxation. The Board of Education continued their support so that the school system could remain closely linked to the library.[23]

Through these early years, though Youngstown Public Library was free and opened to the public, it was clear that service to children took priority. No annual reports for the library were drafted in these years, but Miss Hitchcock reported annually to the Board of Education during the 1890s. In her report for 1892, she noted that six hundred juveniles registered for library cards and the average monthly circulation was 960 books out of a total of 3,608 volumes owned.[24]

Registration grew to 886 children in 1895 who charged out over twelve thousand books that year. Miss Hitchcock

reported that children from grammer school up had unrestricted access to the library's entire book collection. Fiction titles made up the largest percentage of the juvenile circulation.[25] A true believer that children should be able to choose their own reading material, Miss Hitchcock warned teachers not to require books for reading unless first read by the teachers themselves. Miss Hitchcock was aware that children of the same age and grade level did not necessarily have the same reading abilities. She wanted teachers to make allowances for these differences and for this purpose she allowed teachers to borrow three books at a time. All other patrons were limited to one book per library visit.[26] Later in 1895, Miss Hitchcock further expanded library services through teachers by sending fifteen sets of books to classrooms in the Youngstown schools. These book sets were supervised by classroom teachers who could loan them to students for home reading. The supplemental reading sets made it possible for students, unable to visit the library, to finally have access to library services.[27]

By 1898, the collection of books owned at Youngstown Public Library had grown to fourteen thousand and the circulation had more than tripled in five years to an annual total of 77,213 books.[28] 1898 was also the year Miss Hitchcock and other library board members petitioned to change the name of the association to the Reuben McMillan Free Library in honor of the former superintendent and library association president.[29]

The turn of the century brought several changes to Youngstown Public Library. Miss Hitchcock left the library system and new librarians began to implement new ideas of service. Miss Anna L. Morse, librarian from 1902 to 1914, was the most influential of this new generation of librarians. In 1903, Miss Morse, who was the first professional librarian, opened the first Children's Room in Youngstown Public Library history. The Children's Room not only served to collate the materials suitable for juvenile readers, but it offered an area where storytelling could be done without interrupting other library patrons.[30] Storytelling became enormously popular. An entry in the Children's Room day book noted that on February 29, 1907, 275 children had come to hear stories.[31]

When Mahoning County commissioners decided that a new courthouse was to be erected at the site of the existing main library building, Miss Morse was determined that Youngstown would have a formidable replacement. Traveling to New York, she obtained a fifty thousand dollar gift from Andrew Carnegie to build a new library.[32] In 1910, at the corner of Wick and Rayen Avenues, the new library was opened with the motto "For the People" engraved over the public entrance. One side of the main floor was occupied by the Children's Room. Furnishings there varied in size to match the different sizes of its young patrons. Adjoining the Children's Room was a collection of materials for parents and teachers collectively known as the "Professional Library".

These materials, developed by the United States Bureau of Education, included pamphlets with suggestions for a child's home library and bibliographies for use by parents and educators.[33] The collection in the Children's Room reflected both educational and popular reading needs of children. Literary classics suggested by school work were available, as well as fairy tales and tales of adventure.[34] Storytimes continued to attract children and two sessions for younger school children were held each Saturday. Fairy tales and nature stories were told to young listeners. For oldler children, a longer storytime each week featured folktales, true stories and knightly legends.[35] The Christmas season was the most successful time of year for storytelling. In 1917, over five thousand children attended programs during the holiday season. Christmas stories were shared by request at schools and churches as well as in the Children's Room.[36]

Not only were librarians going out to community agencies like schools and churches, the library itself began to purchase property to extend itsellf out from the main building. By the late teens, four branches and eight stations (seven in schools) existed. Individual collections of books were also located in over forty classrooms throughout the city. As a result, circulation of juvenile books was enormous. In 1919, 52,271 books circulated from the Children's Room, 37,372 at branches, 24,322 at stations, 9,811 from school sets and 33,635 for home reading. In

total, over 150,000 juvenile books were charged out at Youngstown Public Library in 1919.[37]

Staffing was a major problem at this time of incredible growth. Only three staff members were available to handle the growing load of juvenile services. To enable them to visit the branches and stations to rotate collections and to weed, a Ford car was purchased.[38] The car was also used to implement librarian Joseph Wheeler's idea of "bringing the library to the people", as frequent trips were made to the grounds of large steel mills in the area. There, children of newly arrived immigrant steelworkers would queue in impatient lines to await the treasures brought to them by this mobile library.[39]

Reference work with children and therefore reference tools found their places in the Children's Room. High school students were hired to handle the circulation so that librarians could be freed up to do the reference work. Easy to read stories were separated out at this time. Storytimes were the only children's services to suffer in the late teens. Due to staff shortages, voluminous circulation demands and flu epidemics, storyhours were suspended in the library. A few were held in churches by special request. In place of storyhours, moving pictures were shown each Saturday in the Children's Room.[40]

Home Reading with School Credit, established in 1919, enabled students in grades three to eight to earn reading credit in school by reading from approved sets of books

developed at each grade level. These books were published by Youngstown Public Library, then purchased and owned by the Board of Education. The books were then housed in individual classrooms and loaned out to students for home use. Each student was required to read at least four books each term in order to maintain a good standing. For reading ten books, a certificate was awarded by the library. If a child read fifteen or more books, his certificate was embellished with a gold seal. Students verbally reported to their teachers who kept a report card of home reading credit. Report cards were sent to the library for certification.[41] The cover of each home reading book stated the library's intent for the program: "To provide practice in silent reading and to create the knowledge and love of books".[42] The program also served to put library books into the hands of more and more children in Youngstown.

As the decade of the 1920s began, the Home Reading program flourished. In the 1920 annual report, statistics showed that 12,233 books existed for the program and their circulation numbered 86,515. Class visits to the library for bibliographic instruction were more frequent than ever before. History, geography and science made up the bulk of reference work in Children's Room.[43] Moving pictures continued to be featured semi-weekly, and attendance averaged eight hundred in 1923. Because of the booming popularity of the library, storyhours were reinstated for lower elementary grade school children. Attendance at weekly programs

averaged between sixty and seventy. For the first time in Youngstown Public Library history vacation reading was instituted. Children were asked to read eight books during the summer. 1923 saw 755 registrants for vacation reading, with 436 certificates of completion being awarded.[44] In 1925, a local bank provided booklet reading logs titled "Books I Have Read" for vacation readers to keep track of their reading. By June 19, eighteen days into registration, over one thousand booklogs had been distributed.[45]

It was also in 1925 that the title 'Director of Children's Work' was first used, naming Miss Gertrude Hall as the holder of this position.[46] Miss Hall was credited with arranging playground library visits during the summer. For three to four hours on Monday and Wednesday, a paneled truck or 'traveling library' visited various playgrounds in Youngstown. Here, children could register for library cards and check out books from the small collection carried on the truck.[47] The 'traveling library' allowed those children who could only enjoy library services through the school during the year to extend their use of Youngstown Public Library offerings to the summer months as well. The truck carried approximately 350 books and a file of library cards. As Miss Ruth Hoffman stated about this mobile collection "...books were made available at the best time and place with as little red tape as possible".[48] By 1929, over eight hundred were on file in the truck and 1,791 books were circulated. A loss of only two books was reported by the staff.[49]

The 1920s also spawned Youngstown Public Library's participation in Children's Book Week. Exhibits of children's books were set up in the main library. In 1923, an essay contest entitled "The Five Books I Should Like To Own" was held. Librarians sent letters to women's clubs and ministers advocating the importance of reading to children.[50]

Children's books were also on exhibit before Christmas. Miss Hoffman purchased a special set of 'the hundred best' children's books to be displayed before the holiday. The books did not circulate, so parents could come to examine the collection at any time in order to see which books to purchase as gifts for their children.[51] The traditional holiday display continued in Children's Room for many years.

By the end of the 1920s, 3,888 children were registered borrowers at Youngstown Public Library. Over sixty-five thousand books were circulated between the Children's Room and library branches, as well as 100,000 plus circulating through the schools. Weekly storytimes were now offered at Children's Room and at the South, West and Brownlee Woods branches. Many requests from churches and youth organizations for booktalks and booklists were reported.[52] Services to schoolage children at Youngstown Public Library had grown to massive proportions. A new group of children was soon to be targeted as the decade of the 1930s approached.

The 1930s brought the Depression to Youngstown Public Library. Budget cuts to the library led to shortages in book

stock, especially in the Home Reading Program. Losses of Home Reading books had always been high because of the wear and tear due to excessive circulation. Stoppage of funds by the Board of Education for the publication of new books forced an end to the program by the mid 30s.[53]

Budget constraints also influenced staffing. The head of children's work, Ruth Hoffman, was also made responsible for branches and the hospital department. Her increased duties, as well as a shortage of children's librarians on the whole, led to the discontinuation of storytimes in all library facilities for the first half of the decade. A decrease in juvenile circulation naturally occurred due to these changes. The one service to remain stable was playground visitation.[54]

Though some services changed, specialized programs were added for children. The hospitals, crippled children's schools and the county detention home were all provided with rotating book collections. This service was especially popular in the detention home where reading could occupy the long, idle hours for residents.[55]

Innovation in the library itself took place, headed by librarian Charles Sumner. Sumner initiated the development of a Mother's Room at the main library, for the purpose of educating mothers on the importance of reading to preschool children--an idea never before considered on such a grand scale at any other library. Because organized education did not reach children under the age of five, Sumner felt that he

could implement services to preschoolers by offering the Mother's Room.[56]

The Mother's Room opened late in 1935 and was located on the second floor of the main library. Furnished with comfortable easy chairs, sofas, rugs, lamps and colorful drapes, the Mother's Room evoked a quiet, homelike atmosphere. The open shelves were lined with big and little picture books, pop-up books and children's and parenting magazines, as well as reference books written by well known child training experts.[57]

Clinics were held in the Mother's Room several times to teach parents the proper reading for their youngsters. The clinics were designed to help mothers organize a sequence of reading development, first using picture books, then rhymes and poetry, then storytelling and finally reading aloud. This step-by-step approach, developed by Sumner, established continuous contact with books and assured the growth of intellect and character in all who participated.[58] Sumner also developed a manual for mothers entitled Birthright of Babyhood which he published through Thomas Nelson and Sons in 1936. The manual, which received positive reviews in several professional journals, included fingerplays, songs, bibliographies and advice for parents.[59]

The Mother's Room was written about in newspapers from New York to Texas. Bertrine Watson, editor of the Library Journal, predicted that libraries everywhere would eventually adopt similar programs of service to mothers and their

children.[60] Even First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was impressed with the well-publicized Mother's Room, when she detoured during her travels, to visit Youngstown Public Library.[61] Unfortunately, though, the problems of the world--the depression and looming world war--took up more time than the mothers of Youngstown had to devote to the use of the Mother's Room. By 1948, after ten years of slowly declining circulation, the Mother's Room was combined with Children's Room.[62] The collection withered away so far as to fit onto a single shelf of parenting books.

By the end of the 1930s, business at the library was picking back up. Juvenile registration reached 19,698 at Youngstown Public Library, which had now expanded to include six city and six county branches. Harriet P. Orr, supervisor of children's work in 1939, reported an incredible juvenile circulation of 369,839 volumes. Storyhours resumed in the late thirties in Children's Room and at the Breaden, Campbell, South, Struthers and West branch libraries. Branches were also beginning to designate space and shelving specifically for children. School visits were still an important service of the library, as was the distribution of graded booklists. Playground service continued each summer.[63] Staff instruction rules, dated 1938, showed that borrowing privilegess allowed children to check out two books and two magazines per visit for up to fourteen days. Any child above the third grade level could register for a

library card on his own; under third grade required parental approval.[64]

One other noteworthy creation of Youngstown Public Library during this era was the annual celebration of Library Week each April. The Youngstown Junior Chamber of Commerce, whose membership included Clarence Sumner, first established Library Week in 1937. The Chamber wanted to call attention to the importance of books and of all libraries, whether located in the home, at school or the public library. Boy Scouts collected books to donate to the library for this first celebration and other groups helped to promote the event. The idea to celebrate the library spread nationwide, and in 1958, the first full-scale national observance took place.[65]

The 1940s brought international focus into the lives of most Americans with the United States' involvement in World War II. Youngstown Public Library helped to bring awareness and involvement to its young patrons through several programs. Radiobroadcasting of world and local events had become a ritual in many homes across America. A fifteen minute weekly talk show, hosted by the library, kept listeners aware of what was new in the world of books. In 1942, a summer reading "Pilot's Club" awarded children 'wings' as licensed pilots after completing reading requirements. Harriet Orr, children's supervisor, felt that the "Pilot's Club" gave children the chance to read for recreation yet kept them in touch with the events of the

world.[66] In 1944, juvenile borrowers received 'draft cards' in the mail calling them to 'active reading duty'. This "Invasion Troopers Club" saw over three thousand participants who earned 'wings' and 'service ribbons'![67] Due to gasoline shortages in 1943 summer playground services had to be discontinued, but with the high interest summer reading ideas, children flocked to branches and the main Children's Room for programs, books and fun.[68]

In 1947 and 1948, Youngstown Public Library involved its young people in the national "Treasure Chest" project in observance of Children's Book Week. The program was organized to furnish new books for the children living in countries devasted by the war. Better understanding between the children of the United States and of these foreign countries was the ultimate goal of the plan. Individual donors and organizations around Youngstown sent books and money allowing the Library to fill six chests of books. The chests, decorated by the art departments of local schools, were shipped to China, Germany, Holland, Japan, Korea and Norway. Letters of appreciation from several of the recipients became treasured keepsakes of the library and its young program participants.[69]

1948 marked the year that library services extended all over Mahoning County with the addition of "The World's Largest Mobile Library". A thirty-four foot book trailer began biweekly visits to twenty county schools. Jane Durrah, Director of children's work, hoped to achieve contact with

every child in the county by school visit or library bookmobile visit. In its first year of operation, the book trailer circulated over 130,000 books and issued thousands of library cards.[70] This phenomenal circulation, added to the already enormous circulation at the Children's Room and branches took juvenile statistics over the one-half million mark in 1949. Librarians calculated that three quarters of all children enrolled in city, county and parochial schools in Mahoning County were library patrons who borrowed an average of twenty-four books per year.[71]

The 1950s became the decade of babyboomers, suburban living, James Dean and Why Johnny Can't Read. All of these influences affected the way that Youngstown Public Library served its youth, and in particular, how services for children at the main library changed. Juvenile circulation surpassed adult in the early fifties as libraries countywide pushed for contacts with children. In 1953, eighteen thousand children came to libraries in class visits and librarians made 825 visits to schools.[72] Juvenile circulation reached near or above one-half million books every year.

A local judge, John W. Davis, donated money for a new Children's Room at Main. In 1954, the children's collection was moved to the ground floor where new furniture and bright paint decorated the John W. Davis Children's Library (CL). Weekly storyhours were held for schoolage and preschool visitors.[73]

In addition to Children's Library, a Youth Room was established in the northeast corner of the main floor to accommodate teens. Twelvle thousand volumes of specially selected books for both educational and recreational reading were purchased. Informal furnishings and decorations made for an inviting area for young adults.[74] The Youth Room also served as headquarters for the library's school reading club which published its own newspaper. The Book-Mark, as the paper was officially titled, contained book reviews, bibliographies of new books, local high school gossip and a schedule of library radio programs.[75]

Unfortunately, the new additions at Main could not stop the urban renewal trend which moved more and more families out of the city and into the suburbs. By 1957, though the number of schoolage children was rapidly growing as post-war babies grew up, the majority of patrons using Children's Library were literature students from Youngstown State University (YSU). A drive for urban and suburban classes to visit Children's Library brought visitors to the facility, but rarely were books checked out during these visits. As Children's circulation dwindled, branch and bookmobile services grew. In 1957, a second book truck was added. More programming was being scheduled in branches and school visits to and from branches increased dramatically.[76]

In the last half of the fifties, reading and education came into focus with the publication of Why Johnny Can't Read by Rudolf Flesch. This book, along with the growing

technological competition between the United States and the Communist world, led parents to take a harder look at the importance of reading. The impact of this revelation was felt in every children's department. Requests by parents and children for the latest books on science and rocketry poured into Youngstown Public Library and librarians labored to keep up with popular demands.[77]

Making libraries more accessible to suburban patrons by increasing the number of branches became the plan of many library systems nationwide in the 1960s. Since most of the circulation was already done at branches and through the bookmobiles, Youngstown Public Library's administration decided to use money to renovate and expand branch service.[78] Children's collections were standard in all brances as well as all types of programming, yet Children's Library remained the hub of growth and collection development and the largest collection of juvenile books was located in Children's Library. In the sixties, librarians in Children's Library worked to streamline and categorize the collection to best serve its patrons. The Youth Room collection was moved to Children's Library and reclassified as Junior High. This new Junior High section was updated with contemporary fiction and nonfiction titles. More reference materials were bought for Children's Library and students who formerly used the adult reference department were given unrestricted access to Children's Library's growing reference collection.[79] Regardless of any new additions, Children's Library did not

gain many new patrons. Branches were requesting more materials from Children's Library, but actual patronage to the children's center remained low. Schoolage program attendance dropped to the point that programming in Children's Library was suspended. In the mid-sixties librarians in Children's Library got more aggressive and began to target the one group that used Children's Library regularly, YSU students. Inservices on children's literature and on bibliographic instruction were held.[80] In addition, librarians solicited daycare agencies and set up preschool storytimes once again. Several six-week storytimes were held each year and attendance averaged twenty-five children.[81]

Collection development continued to expand as the business of juvenile publishing flourished in the late 1960s. Book selection policies were updated in Children's Library. A collection of science project books was indexed and a separate card file was established. In 1968, the Junior High were again reclassified to Young Teen. Updating and upgrading this collection drew increasing interest. Mystery, science fiction and sports books were identified and separated out of the juvenile fiction. This too proved to be a popular change as juvenile circulation grew.[82]

By the end of the decade, juvenile circulation had climbed to over 750,000 books annually, most of this number being circulated in the bookmobiles. Regular class visits to the library had been established at several branches as well as weekly storytimes and other services previously reserved

at Children's Library only.[83] Children's Library became merely a manufacturing point of ideas for children's services, whereas branches were now the points of action where the real business of service was being conducted.

The trend to manufacture and not produce ideas continued in Children's Library through the 1970s. Charlotte Wojtkowski, who headed children's services throughout the sixties and seventies, all but cut off public access in Children's Library. Fewer and fewer programs were held in Children's Library as Miss Wojtkowski focused on collection development and the aesthetic value of the collection. By the mid seventies, no programs were held, no classes visited, no promotion was done--virtually no direct service to children was produced from the main Children's Library.[84]

Branches, on the other hand, were booming with children's programs. In 1971, a 'teachalong' reading program at the Boardman Branch Library paired twenty high school student volunteers with middle school students to help them learn to enjoy reading during the summer. The students met once a week for about an hour, and librarian Mary Baxter supervised the fun.[85] The following summer at the Canfield Branch, a similar program called "Book Buddies Club" was formed. Boardman Branch continued their program in 1972, which expanded to include grade school students.[86] Magic shows, puppet performances, poetry clubs, juggling and karate demonstrations, and film and craft programs brought literally thousands of children to libraries in Mahoning County in the

1970s. In 1978, twenty-six thousand children had library cards. Almost five hundred classes visited a library branch that year and 295 storyhours were attended by more than six thousand youngsters.[87]

The 1980s brought into focus the importance of children's librarians and also a rejuvenation of Children's Library for a short time. In 1981, Gayle Ridge was named as the first coordinator of juvenile services. Mrs. Ridge's job was to oversee the collection of reading materials and to work with programming and staff development. Cardboard books were purchased in bulk, aimed at creating a collection of books for the smallest of patrons. Arts and craft supplies and audiovisual equipment were centralized. Collection development seminars were held for all children's librarians so that ideas and new procedures could be shared and discussed.[88] The following year saw the creation of Toddler storytimes for two and three year olds and their parents. Meeting in Children's Library, eighty-two sessions were held in 1982 with an average attendance of ten children per program. Eighteen thousand children in all attended programs at Youngstown Public Library in 1982, and over half of those attending came to programs in Children's Library.[89] In 1983, a total of 1,485 programs were held for over thirty thousand youths and circulations increased by 37,965 books. Toddler and preschool storytimes proved to be the most popular features as well as special summer programs. Librarian Sue

McCleaf also held three workshops in Children's Library for nursery school teachers on reading program development.[90]

As programs in the libraries increased, contacts with schools suffered. Due to staff shortages and time constraints, only two school visits were reported in 1984 statistics. Only eight professional children's librarians worked at Youngstown Public Library in 1984. These eight had to cover collection development and programming in Children's Library and twenty-two branches and stations. To ease the burden in children's work, a work-study program was instituted and four new librarians were hired and trained by Mrs. Ridge. The new employees, all with bachelor degrees, would work as children's librarians while also working toward a master's degree in library science.[91]

In 1985, Youngstown Public Library reorganized into three regions each supervised by a juvenile coordinator. Juvenile services in the Central Region were supervised by Mary Yee; in the South Region by Josephine Nolfi; and in the West Region by Esther Williams.[92] Programming continued to be a success at branch libraries, where thousands of children came each year to be entertained at various library functions.

Children's Library suffered the most in the late eighties. In 1987, it was closed for five months due to asbestos abatement.[93] Then in 1989, the John W. Davis Children's Library closed permanently. Although circulation had risen from 15,779 in 1978 to 39,731 in 1988, staff shortages due to resignations and departures of work-study librarians for summer coursework forced the closure.

Plans were made to move the thirty thousand volume collection to the North Branch Library, with a small rotating collection of juvenile books to be shelved on the main floor with adult books in order to appease Children's Library's few regular patrons.[94]

The 1980 s ended with juvenile circulation tallying 549,387 books out of Youngstown Public Library's total circulation of 1,469,182 volumes.[95] More than one thousand programs were held throughout the county with an attendance totaling 30,599.[96]

One month into 1990, all children's services were halted at Youngstown Public Library by a month long strike by clerical personnel. Although direct service was lacking, the strike did provide time for the juvenile collection in Children's Library to be thoroughly weeded before it was moved. Another reorganization of professional staff occurred during this library downtime. A unified county system, free from regionalized differences, was put into place. Rae Pazak was named as director of children's services and Miss Nolfi and Miss Yee worked under her to oversee the children's librarians. After midyear, the main children's collection was in place at the North Branch, supervised by Joan Kovacich. Juvenile nonfiction was interfiled on the shelves at North with adult nonfiction. The process of filing all adult and juvenile cards into one catalog was begun. Fines on juvenile materials were eliminated in 1990 in an effort to make library use as free from restrictions as possible for children.

Intensive efforts to reach inner city children in Youngstown were made possible through a Library Services and Construction Act

(LSCA) grant entitled "Reach Out to Children". School visiting to register children for library cards was done fervently. Contacts with community agencies involved with city youths and the school visiting proved to attract large numbers of children to the East, North and South Branches. The LSCA grant funds also enabled the purchase of circulating video players and children's videos for the three inner-city branches. More than thirty-five thousand children attended programs at Youngstown Public Library in 1990.[97] Juvenile cards were registered to 29,108 patrons who charged out more than one-half million books. Youngstown Public Library owned 172,422 juvenile books, 24,516 of which were purchased in 1990.[98]

1991 began with a meeting of children's librarians in the new Children's Library to plan for summer reading. Plans to automate the library system were well underway as well as plans to build a new expanded branch in Boardman. Another meeting in June involved librarians in updating the policies which govern children's services. Stated goals for 1991 include the development of guidelines for the purpose and use of Children's Library's research collection and the strong links to community contacts and schools which have benefited inner-city library services.[99]

Commitment of service to children is evident at Youngstown Public Library both historically and as staff members plan for the future.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

What gives the present its richness is the tradition of the past and the anticipation for the future. Youngstown Public Library continues today to provide quality service to its youth which meet or surpass Ray M. Fry's expected findings of children's services. In 1990, approximately one third of the circulation was juvenile library use. Every major branch has a full-time professional children's librarian or a work-study children's librarian on staff. This figure far surpasses Fry's 34% staffing figures. Programming is offered in large quantities and the content spans ethnic and age differences. School cooperation has had its ups and downs at Youngstown Public Library, but it is recognized today as an important way to service children unaware of the variety of library services open to them. At some point in time (the date was not uncovered in this investigation) children under fifteen were restricted from charging out adult materials without approval from a parent or librarian. Youngstown Public Library does not, however, restrict for in-library use of materials. Audio and video materials are restricted to adults eighteen years of age and

older. All other services are unrestricted for children. Despite these restrictions, Youngstown Public Library serves its juvenile patrons well. More than half of the 1990 book budget was spent on juvenile materials. Clear and thorough book selection policies are in place to assure quality acquisitions of all materials, adult and juvenile. A modest, yet significant, number of books are classified for both the adult and juvenile collections. This essentially eliminates restriction of these titles. Every effort is made to accommodate requests and alternative titles are offered whenever possible. Many patrons, both adult and juvenile, are surprised to find that the coverage of nonfiction titles classified as juvenile is so broad and encompassing.

The future is bright for children's services at Youngstown Public Library. Supervisors continue to include branch librarians in planning children's activities and procedures. Children continue to enjoy programs and the wealth of materials available to them, proven by statistical records.

Future Youngstown Public Library research is needed to collate branch annual reports of the 1960s and 1970s. During this time period, and also during the late 1980s, no combined children's services reports exist. The archival records of the library's history are in need of care to copy and preserve existing records which have worn with age. The rich history of Yungstown Public Library should be cherished by its present day staff, for much has happened over the last

century to develop the quality that Youngstown Public Library offers today. It would also be interesting to compare Youngstown Public Library's history of children's services to other comparable library systems to see what trends might be discovered.

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